THE MINISTER OF PLANNING AND THE MINISTER OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI MADHAV SINH SOLANKI): (a) The Service Rules relating to the Indian Statistical Service provide for all vacancies arising within the Service (from Grade III upwards) being filled only by promotion. It is therefore not correct to say that there is lack of promotion opportunities for officers.

(b) There is already a Centralised Cadre Authority for the Indian Statistical Service, i.e. the Department of Statistics.

(c) Does not arise.

Eradication of Leprosy

711. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a survey conducted by the Indian Health Organisation and the Bombay Leprosy Project has concluded that the stigma attached by Indian Medical personnel to leprosy is a major deterrent in the eradication of the disease; and

(b) if so, what steps Government are taking to remedy the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (KUMARI SAROJ KHAPARDE): (a) In the report it has been mentioned that out of 198 doctors (mainly private medical practitioners), only 13 per cent were not afraid of contracting leprosy infection while examining the patients.

(b) As part of National Leprosy Eradication Programme, Government has initiated health education, publicity and training programme for medical practitioners, para-medical personnel and the community to dispel various wrong facts and fears that exist about leprosy. It has been pointed out that this disease is caused by a bacteria and it is curable. Majority of the leprosy cases are not infectious and even the infectious cases are least contagious of all such diseases.

Much of the apprehension against this disease is because of the age old stigma attached to it. Through sustained health education, proper orientation training and publicity this stigma is on the decline and over 20,000 health personnel and a number of Voluntary Organisations are working with great dedication in the treatment of leprosy patients.

Welfare Facilities for War-widows

712. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that war widows are facing great difficulty in getting welfare facilities from the department concerned of the Ministry of Defence;

(b) whether the Minister had assured the President of the War Widow Guild that a separate department would be created in his Ministry for rehabilitation of war widows and welfare of ex-servicemen; and

(c) if so, what action has been taken so far in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI K. C. PANT): (a) All general and specific difficulties regarding welfare facilities for war widows brought to the notice of Government are attended to expenditiously and with sympathy.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Registered names of professionally qualified with Foreign Assignment Section

713. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of professionally qualified and other post-graduates who had registered their names with the foreign assignment section;

(b) what is the break-up figures according to their qualifications; and

(c) what is the number, out of them, who have been selected for assignments